



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Drivers stay alert for deer movement

Drivers are advised to stay alert as they travel Iowa's roadsides over the coming weeks. Autumn deer behavior, crop harvest and peak travel times for motorists combine to hike the risk of vehicle-deer collisions in Iowa.

From the middle of October until the third week of November, Iowa bucks become more active in the pursuit of does during the breeding season. Motorist may be distracted by the first deer that crosses not seeing the pursuing buck. This adds to multiple scenarios of fast moving, unpredictable deer crossing highways.

The crop harvest is also in full swing, concentrating deer into remaining cover that is often brushy creeks, trees or fence lines which often intersect with roads. A third factor will be the change away from daylight savings time on November 7, placing more Iowans behind the wheel during the deer-heavy dawn and dusk periods.

A few ways to give drivers an edge during this period are to reduce speed, increase following distance from other cars, and to sweep eye movements from ditch to ditch, especially during those low light periods and when approaching those brushy or tree lined 'funnels' near roads. Drivers are also encouraged not to 'veer for deer,' leaving the lane of traffic could cause a collision with another vehicle or a roadside obstacle, such as a utility pole or culvert.

Iowa's deer herd is managed to provide a harvest of between 100,000 and 120,000 annually, that is achieved by providing additional opportunities for hunters to harvest does. Last year, Iowa hunters reported harvesting nearly 110,000 deer.

Media Contact: Jim Coffey, Forest Wildlife Research Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 641-774-2958.

Learn to Hunt program opens registration for upland bird hunting workshop and mentored hunt

DES MOINES - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is offering a program to teach skills needed to hunt, field dress and cook upland birds to anyone who has little to no upland bird hunting experience.

The workshop is scheduled from 6-8 p.m., Dec. 3, at the Olofson Shooting Range, near Polk City. It is designed for participants 18 years of age and older. There is a \$45 fee to attend.

The workshop features a two-hour knowledge and skills building session with instructors teaching the basics of upland hunting and wingshooting. The event also includes two mentored hunts – one on Dec. 4 and one on Jan. 8 - at Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge. Space is limited so early registration is encouraged. Participants will receive a hat, vest and a membership provided by Pheasants Forever.

“For those interested in the challenge of upland hunting as a means of sourcing their own protein, this program provides the opportunity to learn the skills and knowledge it takes to do it all yourself,” said Jamie Cook, program coordinator with the Iowa DNR.

Participants will learn basic strategies for hunting upland birds such as proper equipment, where to hunt, safe shooting practices, and how to field dress, butcher and cook them.

For more information and to begin the registration process, visit <http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=dep4qyuab&oeidk=a07eip589plaf30c9d0>

The program is provided through a partnership with the Iowa DNR and Pheasants Forever. It is part of a national effort to recruit, retain and reactivate hunters due to the overall decline in hunting and outdoor recreation.

Media Contact: Jamie Cook, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-350-8091.

Iowa's wild rabbit populations remain free of deadly virus

State wildlife experts are on the lookout for a new virus impacting native rabbit and hare populations. Following an initial outbreak in New Mexico in March 2020, the virus causing rabbit hemorrhagic disease is considered stable-endemic in Arizona, Colorado, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Utah and Wyoming.

Rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus serotypes 2 (RHDV2) can persist in the environment and can be spread from rabbit to rabbit, by predators, insects and even by vehicle traffic, impacting populations in new areas. While the virus is not currently in Iowa, it has been confirmed in domestic rabbits in Minnesota and South Dakota, and in the wild rabbit population in eastern Colorado and northern Texas.

The disease has had a significant impact on native populations, as well as feral and domestic rabbits which are also susceptible. Iowa State Wildlife Veterinarian Dr. Rachel

Ruden said keeping this virus on Iowans' radar is key to minimizing its impact should it show up here.

"Eastern cottontails are such common yard visitors, we sometimes forget that they can get sick too and those reports are important," Dr. Ruden said. "Infected animals die quickly, sometimes with blood or red-tinged foam visible around the nose, but often with no signs of illness. If you find a dead rabbit, and especially a cluster of dead rabbits, please reach out as early detection is key to stemming a larger outbreak."

While Iowa's eastern cottontail population is expected to survive a disease incursion, there is some concern regarding Iowa's declining jackrabbit population, which is concentrated in certain parts of the state and so might have difficulty rebounding.

The recently emerged strain, RHDV2, was first detected in Europe in 2010. It is not related to epizootic hemorrhagic disease that can cause mortality in deer or COVID-19, the current cause of the human pandemic. It does not pose a risk to people and is not known to affect other animals. More information about the disease is available online at https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/fs-rhdv2.pdf and guidance specific to hunters and outdoor recreationalists is available at https://www.fishwildlife.org/application/files/9315/9662/4394/AFWA_Rabbit_Hemorrhagic_DiseaseGuidance_6-29-2020.docx.

A vaccine is now available for emergency use through a licensed veterinarian to protect domestic rabbits. Iowans can learn more by going to <https://iowaagriculture.gov/news/idals-authorizes-use-rhdv2-vaccine-1082021>

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